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## VI.—FELSSPAR—FELDSPAR.

With unusual unanimity English and German dictionaries and encyclopaedias unite in deriving this modern word of frequent occurrence from 'Feld' a field, and 'Spath' a lamellated crumbly, slaty, very soft, and heavy stone (Körner). J. D. Dana, who is painstaking and careful in his orthography of names of minerals, and is properly accepted as an authority on this subject by English speaking mineralogists, says in his 'System of Mineralogy' (6th ed., Wiley, N. Y., 1892, p. 315) 'Felspar, *bad orthog.* dating from Kirwan'. Nevertheless it is undeniable that this mineral is not found in fields, i. e. farmed land, more frequently than any other, whereas it is the most important constituent of the rock (Fels) which forms by chains the skeletons of continents. Kluge, while holding the root of 'Feld' unknown, gives an intermediate word 'Fjall' related to the O. H. G. 'Feld', and also to the N. H. G. Fels. (Etym. Wörthb. etc., 1894). Indeed, the soil of a field is but the ground-up fragments of rocks, with some added organic matter. Grimm connects 'Feld' with similar roots in O. H. G., niederl., etc., but believes 'Fels' specifically a high German word not found in Gothic, Frieslandic, nor other tongues but introduced by Luther. Professor Hermann Collitz, to whom I referred the subject of this note, thought 'Felsspath' " \*\* a very interesting, in fact, the only satisfactory explanation of 'Feldspath' which has, so far, been given. \*\*" (letter of Oct. 29, 1907).

As regards the second part of this compound word, 'Spath', its meaning as given by Körner above is as far from the fact as is the occurrence of the mineral in fields, supposed to be indicated by the first part of the word. None of the common spars such as calc spar, iron spar, fluor spar, etc., would conform to the description given by Grimm of a 'blättrich brechendes Gestein'. In so far as 'Spath' or 'Spar' may be supposed to be connected with 'Spalten' there is no objection to it, because all the spars have cleavage in definite directions, but not in lamellae like mica, as is suggested by 'blättrich brechend'.

Prof. Collitz is kind enough to call my attention to Oskar Schade's 'Altdeutsches Wörterbuch' (2d ed. Halle, 1872-82)

in which the original meaning of *spât*, found in late O. H. G. and early M. H. G. is 'alum' (!); and he adds that Schleicher's identification of M. H. G. '*spât*' with Sanskrit '*Sphaṭī*', 'alum' is acceptable. Schade assumes that the word is of Iranian origin and that it was carried, together with improved methods of winning alum, to Europe and India. Still the etymology of the word evades detection.

In answer to my suggestion that '*Spath*' might possibly be derived from '(ge)*späht*', that which was spied or seen; alluding to the high lustre of the facets of this mineral which reflect light from many points in an otherwise indistinguishable rock of which they are components (this brilliant lustre being a characteristic of all the spars); Prof. Collitz demurred because "a noun formed with suffix 't' from the root *Späh* would have preserved the radical 'h'".

Prof. Collitz points out that "in O. H. G. (or N. H. G.) Latin glosses *spatt* also occurs as a name of 'nitrum' (saltpeter), and in the compound *grünspatt*, of 'viridis eris' (i. e. verdigris)."

This is very significant of the original reason for connecting these entirely different objects together by the single word 'Alum'.

Calc spar (calcium carbonate), iron spar (iron carbonate), fluor spar (calcium fluoride), nitrum or saltpeter (potassium nitrate), verdigris (copper carbonate; the real verdigris, copper acetate is not meant here), are all very different from each other, and from alum (hydrated aluminum-potassium-sulphate): but all are still more unlike feldspar (aluminum-potassium silicate) in hardness, tenacity, solubility, structure, cleavage, mode of occurrence, etc. In one respect, however, they resemble each other, namely in possessing a strong vitreous lustre; and this one quality in common, which it is true would be the first to arrest the attention, has been the cause of associating them.

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